

JUN 21 2000

THE BAPTIST *Record*

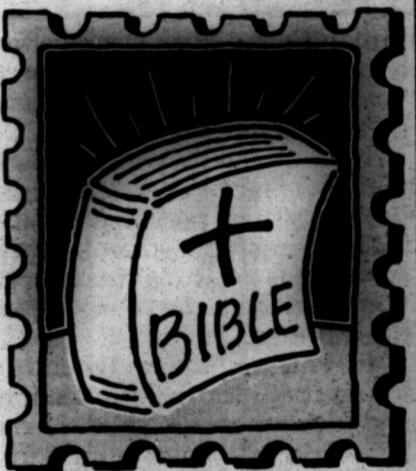
JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

#BXNFMXY CARRIER ROUTE
#000029106150# 005-DTM 30
SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL 6-13
901 COMMERCE ST NASHVILLE 401
TN 37203-3620

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

JUNE 15, 2000
VOL. 124
NO. 19

Worship.now



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'00 Youth Night moving to one session

By Carl M. White
Associate Editor

Worship.now is the theme for the 2000 Mississippi Baptist Youth Night, according to Don Lum, youth consultant with the evangelism department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB). The annual event is set for Friday, July 14, at the Mississippi Coliseum from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.

"Youth ministers and sponsors need to note that this year we are only having the Friday night session," Lum said. In past years there have been two identical sessions, one on Friday evening, the second on Saturday morning.

"Our goal is to have the coliseum full of teenagers and sponsors from all across the state who have come together for the purpose of worshiping God."

There is no preregistration or charge for admission to youth night. Seats are available on a first come, first served basis.

Lum pointed out that a love offering will be taken during the service to help with expenses. A \$2 per person donation is recommended.

Students are encouraged to bring their friends and a Bible.

This event promises to be a special time of worship before God, led by gifted communicators, Lum indicated.

Lum said there was a three-fold purpose for the Youth Night. "First, we want our teenagers to worship God. Second, we hope to see a number of teenagers to realize they have a need for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Third, we want to see

teenagers leave this experience changed. You cannot have an encounter with God and come away the same."

Leading the session are two gifted and proven communicators to teens, Lum indicated.

Speaking is Gregg Matte of College Station, Texas. A native of Houston, Texas, Matte has degrees from Texas A&M University and Southwestern Seminary. He has led youth conferences and retreats across the nation and is the author of the book *The Highest Education: Becoming a Godly Man*.

Matte is the founder and director of Breakaway Ministries at Texas A&M, which touches over 4,000 students each week.

Leading worship is Chris Tomlin of Houston, Texas.

"God is using both of these guys to impact the lives of teenagers at youth camps and retreats," Lum said.

Plans for this year's event were made by the Youth Night planning committee, which consists of Randy Cuchens of First Church, Newton; Jay Fletcher of First Church, Jackson; Rob Futral of Countrywood Church, Byram; Don Lum, MBCB; Michael Pierce of First Church, Pearl; and Gary Watts of Wynndale Church, Byram.

For more information on Youth Night, contact Don Lum at the Evangelism Department of the MBCB, P. O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3280 or toll-free outside of Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 280. Email: dlum@mbcb.org.

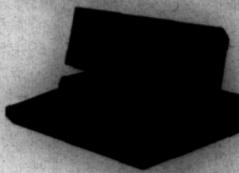
Woman's Missionary Union in session in Orlando

Rebecca Williams (pictured right) of Gautier, president of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) calls to order the June 12 session of the 2000 national WMU annual meeting at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando. Williams was one of four state WMU presidents to preside over the individual sessions. Full coverage of the 2000 national meeting and the Baptist Convention's 2000 annual meeting in the July 12 issue of the 22 issue of The Baptist Record. (Photo by Jim Johnson)

A flag processional (pictured below) leads the Way of the Cross procession as a group of international missionaries makes its way through the convention center during the national annual meeting.



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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VOLUME 124 NUMBER 19
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date.

Another pro-life victory for Mississippi

The scientist on the educational television program focused intently on the tiny event occurring in the petri dish under his microscope. It was an event that has become quite common around the world today — the conception of a "test tube" baby for a couple who tried in vain for years to have a child.

As the father's sperm unerringly found its way to the mother's egg, the scientist excitedly declared, "There! We just saw the beginning of life."

It's a sad irony in modern America that such a statement would be a revelation in itself. What has been accepted throughout medical history as an inarguable fact is now viewed as questionable in the angry shouting match that presently passes for debate on the issue of abortion.

What is so difficult about understanding when human life begins? If what is forming inside the mother is not alive, then why must it be "terminated" to prevent its growth? By any reasonable scientific standard, what is growing inside the mother is indeed alive and indeed human.

Pro-abortionists, unable to fight against what common sense confirms as irrefutable truth — that life begins at conception — are reduced then to the irrational claims that "personhood" doesn't begin until the "fetus" is able to survive outside the mother, or that abortion saves the taxpayer the expense of supporting welfare babies, or that every baby should be a wanted baby.

Even those people who support the horrid partial birth abortion procedure, where a full-term infant is ripped feet first from its mother's womb and then destroyed, have to admit that what is being discarded as medical waste is no less than a complete person capable of surviving outside its mother.

So what is an unborn human life worth in America today? Not much — unless that human life happens to be a developing Mississippian.

State lawmakers, supported by the large pro-life community in this state, have seen to it that the rest of the country knows human life means something in Mississippi.

Unable to completely outlaw abortion because of rulings made by both the U.S. and Mississippi Supreme Courts, legislators have nonetheless passed bills in recent sessions that:

- require parental or judicial consent for minors wanting to have an abortion;
- mandate a waiting period before an abortion can be performed; and
- institute minimum medical and sanitary standards for abortion clinics.

(Believe it or not, such standards have not always been in place.)

We can now add another important piece of legislation to that list.

A bill introduced in the 2000 legislative session by Rep. Eric Robinson, a member of First Church, Quitman, and signed into law by Governor Ronnie Musgrove, a member of First Church, Jackson, criminalizes actions that lead to the death of an unborn child other than through legalized abortion as specified by the U.S. and Mississippi Supreme Courts.

Pro-life supporters like Sandy Ellard, a member of First Church, Kosciusko, and daughter of the late Mississippi pastor and director of missions Ed Gandy, got behind Robinson's legislation and helped shepherd it through the labyrinthine legislative process.

Mississippi Lt. Governor Amy Tuck recently called Robinson and Ellard to her office in the Capitol to commend them for their commitment to the bill and to pro-life causes in general.



BAPTISTS AT THE FORE — Mississippi Lt. Governor Amy Tuck (center) commends two Mississippi Baptists who she said were instrumental in passing the fetal homicide law in the 2000 session of the Mississippi Legislature — state Rep. Eric Robinson (left), a member of First Church, Quitman, and Sandy Ellard, a member of First Church, Kosciusko. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

"It makes me proud to live in this state," Tuck said.

"There were people fighting for this bill that I didn't even know," reported Robinson.

"We were the only state to pass any pro-life legislation this year," added Ellard.

Virtually no secular media covered the story. Of course, threats have been made to challenge the pro-life laws in court, and cultural elitists have painted Mississippi's passion for protecting the unborn as a throwback to another era unworthy of such a modern, enlightened society as we enjoy in America today.

Let us not be discouraged, however. There's not a shred of doubt that what we're doing is the right thing.

How do we know? The Bible tells us so.

GUEST OPINION:

Wake up, Dad

By Jerry Moore, pastor
New Prospect Church, Oxford

exceptions to the rule, but they are just that — exceptions.

The polls are confirmed by personal observation of many years in the ministry. The young people who have the best chance of growing up to be wholesome, productive adults — who have the best chance of avoiding the pitfalls that the world, the flesh, and the devil have thrown in their path — are the young people who live in whole, functional, traditional families.

Dad, I have a message for you. You need to be there, but you need to be more than just there. You need to be investing your life in your kids. You need to have an intentional ministry to them, equipping them for life as disciples of Jesus Christ.

What are your kids learning from you? Are you teaching your sons to be good workers, good athletes, good hunters, and good fishermen? Are you

at least giving moral support as your wife teaches your daughters to be good workers and good homemakers?

What about teaching them to be good Christians? Do not tell me you are not a teacher of spiritual things. Do not tell me that it is best to leave that sort of thing up to preachers and Sunday School teachers. You are a teacher. The textbook is your life. What is important to you is going to be important to your children.

If your children know that personal Bible reading and prayer are not important to you, those things won't be important to them, either.

If Sunday morning finds you in the woods instead of in God's house, your children will know that recreation is more important to you than God and his church.

Dad, if your entertainment comes from TV sitcoms full of

profanity and illicit sexual situations, where do you expect your children to find their entertainment?

If you casually watch shows that trivialize or even lend support to sexual perversion, violence, drug abuse, and other societal ills, how do you expect your children to feel about these things?

If you regularly listen to music that glorifies fornication and alcohol abuse, should you be surprised when your kids listen to heavy metal or gangsta rap? You shouldn't be. You blazed the trail.

In short, Dad, you need to wake up. You are not on this earth to live for yourself. As a father, you are here to act in the best interest of your children.

You should be teaching them by word and example to resist the world's efforts to squeeze them into its own mold. You should be showing them, up close and personal, what it is like to have your life transformed by the indwelling presence of God.

I sincerely believe that anything less than this makes you less than a success as a father. May God help you to move in this direction.

Missionary remembers to care in ministry

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Just before Hebert Palomino went overseas as a missionary, he received some advice he'll never forget.

"Remember that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Those were the words of C.W. Brister, a pastoral care professor at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where Palomino then was a doctoral student. In the nearly 12 years since he heard that comment, Palomino has seen for himself the truth of his mentor's words.

As a missionary trained in family counseling, Palomino has shared Christ's love with hurting people in South America while helping them cope with some tough traumas of life — terminal illness, death, failed marriage, attempted suicide, sexual abuse, and more. Through the ministry of pastoral care, Palomino has led many lost people to a Savior who can heal their brokenness.

"As missionaries, we don't go overseas to indoctrinate people, to make them believe as we believe," says Palomino, a missionary of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

"Our first priority is to help them come to know the Lord, to let them see the incarnational presence through our care for them, to let them see that there's something in us that makes a big difference."

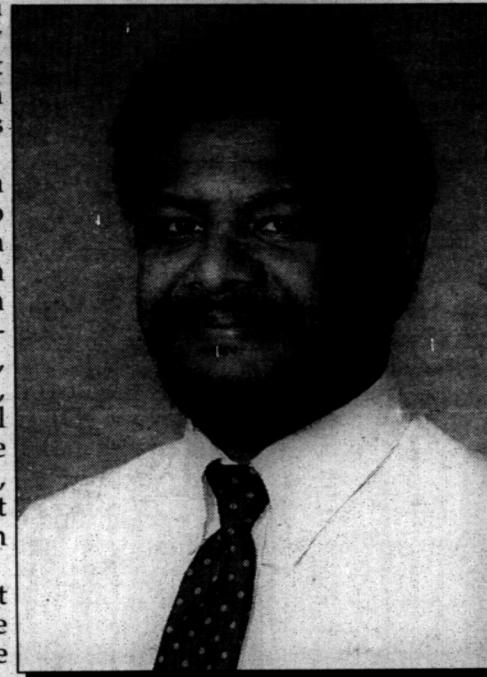
Palomino, a native of Cali, Colombia, has done exactly that since he and his wife, the former Karen Hickman from El Dorado, Kan., were appointed missionaries by the International Mission Board (IMB) in 1989.

They served first in Trujillo, Peru, and later transferred to Asuncion, Paraguay, where Palomino was a family counselor at the Baptist hospital and a professor of pastoral care at the Baptist seminary.

Later he served nearly three years as an IMB member care consultant, traveling across the

board's Eastern South American region to counsel with missionaries and their families.

Currently, Palomino is a missionary-in-residence at the International Mission Board's home office in Richmond, Va., where he is using his family counseling background to help the board's office of mission personnel select new international missionaries.



Palomino

Throughout Palomino's missionary service, God has used his counseling skills to open some amazing doors for sharing the gospel — especially during his years in Paraguay.

At the Baptist hospital in Asuncion, for example, Palomino led Paraguay's first heart transplant recipient to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Another door opened when Palomino was invited to appear regularly on a live, national television talk show, "Good Morning Paraguay." Callers phoned in questions about family issues, which gave him many opportunities to speak about his faith on the air.

Through the talk show, Palomino got to know the owner of the television station, the daughter of General Andres Rodriguez, a former president of Paraguay.

She invited the missionary to meet with her father, who then was dying of cancer. Palomino's specialty is counseling terminally ill patients and their families.

During the meeting, Palomino led the ex-president to a saving faith in Christ, just a few weeks before he died following cancer surgery.

At the family's invitation, Palomino also counseled with them during their grief and shared the good news of Jesus Christ.

He continued to counsel weekly with Rodriguez's widow until the Palominos returned to the States last year.

At Mrs. Rodriguez's invitation, the Palomino family will visit again in her home during a mission trip to Paraguay this summer.

"The door is wide open. I don't know what the Lord is doing in their lives," Palomino says of the ex-president's family, "but he's working."

Meanwhile, God is at work using Palomino in a new avenue of ministry at the IMB's home office. Palomino currently implements and interprets psychological testing of missionary candidates and works with candidate consultants — IMB staff members who guide candidates through the missionary appointment process — to help them determine a candidate's readiness for the rigors of missionary service.

He guides consultants in how to address family of origin and other psychological issues with their candidates, sometimes advising that candidates seek counseling before moving forward in the appointment process.

"When we talk about psychological, emotional issues, it's important to understand that we as human beings are unpredictable in so many ways," says Palomino.

"Sometimes we see great candidates with great potential, with no major psychological issues, but once they go to the field, something happens with them, and they don't make it."

We say, 'What happened here?' But sometimes there are candidates you've got a bunch of question marks on, and you wonder if they're going to make it, but by the grace of God, we see folks who come from very dysfunctional backgrounds who adjust quite well to the field."

Looking at the whole picture, "I can see that the Lord is working in all this appointment process," says Palomino. "But at the same time, it's important to understand that there are some issues future missionaries need to address here in the States before they go to the field to do what God has called them to do.

Because under the tension of language and cultural acquisition, many of those issues — like grief or problems with their family of origin — are going to pop up sooner or later."



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE



PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

JUNE 15, 2000

VOL. 124

NO. 19

SBC site generates 2M hits

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — More than 2 million hits have been generated on the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) newly designed website — www.sbc.net — since its May 10 debut, and the SBC home page has been called up more than 60,000 times. One of the most popular items on the website is the church search function. The church search allows people to locate SBC churches closest to their homes. Between May 10 and May 30, information pages on specific churches were accessed nearly 28,000 times. There were 23,000 specific searches completed by users."

The popular feature offers users the ability to search for a church by city, zip code, state, or the partial name of a church. The function will provide actual driving times and maps. The new feature also includes links to SBC churches that already have websites.

Baptist Press, the official news service of the convention, registered 200,871 hits during the first month of the new design with 23,681 news articles viewed.

Looking back

10 years ago

The Mississippi-Illinois Baptist partnership begins this summer, with two Illinois groups coming to Mississippi, and 15 Mississippi groups traveling to Illinois, according to Paul Harrell, state Brotherhood director and coordinator of the partnership.

20 years ago

Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, breaks ground on a multipurpose activities building and music suite. Kermit D. McGregor, pastor, leads the service. The new building and renovations are expected to cost \$1.3 million. This is the church's fifth ground breaking in 23 years.

50 years ago

Baptists have five distinctives, writes A. L. Goodrich, editor of The Baptist Record — the competency of the individual soul; the Bible as the one and only all-sufficient rule for faith and practice; baptism by immersion for professing believers; democracy in the local church; and separation of church and state.

Student needs energize collegiate minister

LOWELL, Mass. (BP) — The numbers were small that particular night at the Abundant Life Fellowship, meeting on the campus of the University of Massachusetts in Lowell — but for guest Bible study leader John Ramirez the payoff for such experiences comes in working with students like Jennifer

Wangia — a Kenya native seeking to grow spiritually as well as intellectually in the overwhelmingly secular environment of the college campus.

"The reason why I keep coming back is this gives us a great place to grow spiritually on a campus that is not Christian at all," she said after the study. "It's pretty much the only place where you can come and feel

comfortable talking as Christians, sharing, and things like that."

That is the need that energizes Ramirez, who serves as director of collegiate ministries for the Baptist Convention of New England and a North American Mission Board missionary. He was featured with his wife, Anna, during the March 5-12 Week of Prayer for North American Missions.

With the limited resources of what constitutes a minority religious group in the

Northeast, he hopes to make an impact on 275 college campuses — including some of the country's most prestigious institutions of higher education.

It is in this environment that Ramirez is helping craft a different sort of paradigm for campus ministry. It is one in which meetings are fewer, numbers are smaller, and backgrounds are more diverse — but relationships are critical to making a lasting impact on leaders of tomorrow.

"In that short time that we have them, we try to mature them as Christians," he said. "If they're seekers, we try to introduce them to Christ. If they are Christians already, we grow them, send them out into the marketplace and give them a good church base as much as we can."

Like many of the Southern Baptist leaders in New England, the Ramirez's roots are in the South. They both grew up in Oklahoma, where they were involved in student ministry through Ramirez's work at several campuses — ultimately at Oklahoma State University (OSU) in Stillwater. But through involvement in mission projects, they increasingly felt the call to serve in a new-work area.

"With each passing trip it just seemed like I was leaving more and more of my heart in these areas, and I remember I was very disturbed about something I saw," he said. "I always believed that it was just the young maverick pastors and visionaries who went to minister in newer work areas, but I soon realized that there were many who simply went there to retire or escape."

Ramirez came to his current position on a 10-month sabbatical, what he thought would be a short-term assignment. But both he and Anna fell in love with New England and its people, and the position was made permanent. His students at OSU knew bet-

ter than he did what God had in store.

"When they did their farewell party at the end of the semester, it had a tremendous air of finality to it," he said. "They said, 'Your heart's not here anymore. It seems to be somewhere else.'"

Shortly after they began their assignment, the Ramirezes knew the students were right. While others speak of a period of adjustment when changing cultures so abruptly, they immediately fell in love with the region and its people. Within a few months his position was made permanent.

"When I arrived in New England I thought, 'What a wonderful, wonderful place,'" he said. "The sense of community here is just amazing to me. Once you get past the facade of the fast pace of Boston and New England ... there is a real sincerity to these people."

Anna, too, quickly fit in, as a volunteer teaching conversational English at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, then being able to minister to internationals through employment at an immigration law firm. This year she was chosen as coordinator of volunteers for Hearts for Boston, the name local Southern Baptists have chosen for the city's Strategic Focus Cities effort. The initiative — sponsored nationally by the North American Mission Board — will bring volunteers and other resources to the city culminating in 2001 for evangelism and ministry.

It is a lonely ministry at times, he said, particularly for campus ministers from the South. They are unaccustomed to Baptist ministry being compared to cults on campuses that have rejected Christian philosophy.

"We're kind of riding the wave of diversity right now," he said.

"Whatever it takes," he said. "Whatever it takes to reach people, that's what we'll do."



FINDING THEIR PLACE — John and Anna Ramirez, transplants from Oklahoma, say they quickly gained a love for the city of Boston and its people. Anna now works in downtown Boston as volunteer coordinator for Heart of Boston, the name local Southern Baptists have chosen for the city's Strategic Focus Cities effort. (BP photo by James Dotson)

DAD'S DAY

In the great love chapter, 1 Cor. 13, the Apostle Paul concludes by saying, "When I became a man I put away childish things." This Sunday is a special day across our land and a good day for churches to focus on fathers.

What is a man? I suppose the answer to that question can only be defined by each individual reader. Certainly a man is more than just a gender recognition and a father is more than a biological participant producing a child.

Some time ago I heard Paul Harvey reporting on the "Order of Manly Men." I had never heard of such a thing and though many of us may not be aware of the organization, the Order of Manly Men claims to have a membership of over a thousand.

These manly men meet once a year in some remote location and spend time together going into the woods or a wilderness area and doing manly things. Now, according to the report that Paul Harvey gave, the Order of Manly Men gather, chomp on cigars, and eat Spam like real men! Generally, they flex their manliness for several days at the convocation.

After hearing that news, I asked several people if they had ever heard of the Order of Manly Men and did not find



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

anyone who had. I also asked people if they had ever heard of anyone who had ever been to a gathering of the Order of Manly Men. I found none!

From what I can tell, the Order of Manly Men is not necessarily orderly and probably not very manly. What in the world does chomping on a cigar have to do with being manly?

Not long ago I saw a sixth-grade boy, with a cigar in his mouth, sporting biceps that looked like rubber bands and an attitude similar to an alligator with a migraine headache. For some reason it was not the image that I had of being a man.

If these folks, in the Order of Manly Men, find that eating Spam is a manly exercise, I'd like to see what they would do if they tackled a plate of boiled chitterlings. Now, I am here to tell you that if a fellow could eat a big plate of boiled chitterlings and keep it down, he might have a reason to apply for manliness.

What strikes me as most significant is that the Order of Manly Men really epitomizes what most people in our day and time think of as manliness — things like being big, brash, loud, and bullish, all of which seem to be something that an assertive woman could do as well as a man.

What a strange contradiction it is to the manliness that is presented in the Bible, or in the manliness that is role-modeled in our Savior and standard, Jesus Christ.

His manliness took courage as he certainly did not just fit into the norm of society. His manliness was characterized by such things as sensitivity to the needs of others, appreciation for the actions of others, determination to correct wrongs, and purity of thought and action.

His was a manliness that displayed love for every person. Whether he was accepted or rejected, he showed love!

With a soul that was touched by the very presence of God, our Lord moved out into a

world, not to chomp on a cigar or to do the deeds that would prove he was courageous, but to touch lives in a redemptive, uplifting, and healing manner.

One by one he called followers, men and women, whose lives would be patterned after his, and empowered by him to reach out to others with strength from Heaven. His was not the Order of Manly Men, but rather the church, the "Order of Godly Men and Women."

From those initial beginnings two thousand years ago, little has changed. Well, maybe things have changed, but the change has not in any way decreased the need for truly good men.

It takes a much stronger man to act like Jesus than it does to act like a jerk. It takes a lot more grace to demonstrate love than it does to be unloving. It takes courage in far greater quantities to lead a family in spiritual things than to leave them alone to go on their own.

As we come to Father's Day, it is a good day to celebrate those who have gone before and left us so much of the things of God. It is a good day to pause and evaluate where we are in our walk with the Lord and how we are fitting in to God's "Order of Manly Men."

Fathers, may God bless you and use you to be a blessing to your family.

Twyla Snider: prison warden with a Bible

CUSHING, Okla. (BP) — "When as a child I saw missionaries who came to our church dressed in their native costumes, I thought it was cool and wanted to be a missionary," said Twyla Snider. Although Snider now wears the title of warden instead of missionary, her calling is one of missions.

However, a few years ago, those who knew her would never have thought of her as a missionary.

"I had a 'potty' mouth, and could throw an inmate to the ground with the best of them," Snider said.

Adopted into an Assembly of God pastor's home, Snider grew up in northeastern Oklahoma. She attended Northeastern Oklahoma A&M, where she earned an associate degree in public affairs, then graduated from Oklahoma State University (OSU) with a bachelor's in sociology and Tulsa University with a master's degree in urban studies.

It was while she was at OSU that she took a corrections course under a well-known professor who told her she had the perfect personality to work in corrections. After a three-month internship at Tulsa Community Treatment Center, she was hooked and began a life's work in the field of corrections.

Before becoming warden at the new Cimarron Correction Facility in Cushing, Okla., in 1997, Snider was assistant warden at Holdenville for one year, worked in the juvenile system three and a half years, and in the state corrections system 17 years.

She said while serving at Lexington Assessment and Reception Center, her job became unpleasant.

"I had always been well-revered in the department of corrections, but that was being questioned," she recalled.

Snider was also going through a divorce at that time and became so despondent at one point that she pointed a gun at her head and was ready to "blow out my brains," until she remembered her two sons and knew she couldn't do that to them.

While attending a stress management course, she said she picked up some Christian literature.

"I also asked Christians to pray for me, including a group of inmates who already were praying for my salvation," she said. "I knew all the right things to do. I grew up in church and had 21 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School, but I was rebellious and never surrendered my life to God."

Snider recounted she woke up at 2 one morning at 36 years of age and "knew

immediately God was there." At that point she surrendered her life to God.

But the next morning, she began to question what she had done in the middle of the night. She said she told her secretary that "every time I cuss, it is like it is being sent over the public address system."

After hearing what happened earlier that morning, the secretary said, "Don't you realize what happened? You made a

Snider said for the next two months things at work still were not good, but she received peace from prayer when things went wrong.

Then one day she got a call from the director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS), who offered her a job as assistant director of the juvenile agency. He told her he wanted to offer her the director's job, but politics prevented it. When she asked him what she would be doing, he said, "I don't know. I just created the job today."

The next day, Snider said she read in the Daily Oklahoman that DHS laid off 150 employees the day before.

"I know God had to work that miracle, creating a job for me the same day 150 others lost their jobs," she said.

Two weeks later, the man offered the top job in the juvenile division declined the position, and it was given to Snider.

"I was in the top position, and I had no idea what to do," she confessed. "I spent a lot of time in bathroom stalls praying for wisdom, and I was successful."

Snider said she was working on establishing a Christian boys' ranch in Konawa when she was offered a job as assistant warden at the prison in Holdenville.

"At the same time I was offered the job in Holdenville, I discovered the boys' ranch was not going to be approved," she said.

A year later, she became warden at the new medium security prison facility in Cushing.

"When I came to Cushing, the dream I had was that I was supposed to walk across the yard with my Bible in hand and to conduct chapel services," she said. "But there was no chapel here."

Snider does, however, lead devotionals with inmates at 7 a.m. each Wednesday.

"We have inmates here who pray two to three hours every day," she said. "If I have a need, the inmates are notified."

There is a sense of peace at the Cushing facility. Maybe it's because of Snider's faith. Noted

Bettis: "The effects of a good warden or a bad warden roll down to the yard."

Snider said inmates who knew her at other facilities and before her Christian conversion just look at her and say, "You've changed."

Maybe from warden to missionary?



BIBLE-TOTING WARDEN — Warden Twyla Snider talks with an inmate in the "yard" at Cimarron Correctional Facility, where many times she is seen carrying a Bible. (BP photo by Dana Williamson)

commitment to God."

The secretary called Paul Bettis, Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma coordinator of criminal justice ministries, who at that time was chaplain at Lexington. Bettis prayed with Snider and gave her some Christian tracts.

Karr, 52, guilty of extortion. Karr, an ex-convict, was acquitted of federal kidnapping conspiracy charges despite testimony from prison inmates who said Karr told them he was involved in the slayings of O'Hair, 76, her son Jon Garth Murray, 40, and granddaughter Robin Murray O'Hair, 30.

Prosecutors suggested the O'Hair trio was kidnapped, robbed of \$600,000, killed, and their bodies dismembered. To date, no bodies have been found.

During the trial, two defense witnesses testified they saw O'Hair alive during the time prosecutors allege she was kidnapped or killed.

Gordon, an associate with the NAMB's interfaith evangelism team, testified May 25 that he

believed he saw O'Hair in a restaurant in Romania where he was dining in November 1997. "I believe that it was her, but as I testified in court I can't say with 100% certainty it was her," Gordon told Baptist Press.

Gordon, who had been lecturing at a Baptist school in Romania, said he was dining with his translator when they noticed a woman who looked like O'Hair sitting at a table about 10 feet away eating alone. Gordon, who described the woman as looking "sickly," said they were the only people eating in the restaurant at the time.

O'Hair mystery not solved with Texas conviction

AUSTIN, Texas (BP) — A federal trial centered on the disappearance of the nation's most outspoken atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, and her family ended June 2, with the conviction of O'Hair's self-described bodyguard on four charges of extorting money from the O'Hair family in 1995.

The trial included testimony from a Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) staff member, Bill Gordon Jr., that he may have seen O'Hair alive in 1997 in Romania.

After four days of deliberation, jurors found Gary Paul

Karr, 52, guilty of extortion. Karr, an ex-convict, was acquitted of federal kidnapping conspiracy charges despite testimony from prison inmates who said Karr told them he was involved in the slayings of O'Hair, 76, her son Jon Garth Murray, 40, and granddaughter Robin Murray O'Hair, 30.

Federal agents presented documentation of hundreds of telephone calls, car rentals, airplane trips, and other financial transactions they said implicated Karr and showed he extorted money from the O'Hairs, according to the Associated Press.

Karr faces life in prison under the federal three-strikes law because of prior convictions. Sentencing was scheduled for Aug. 4.

Prosecutors suggested the O'Hair trio was kidnapped, robbed of \$600,000, killed, and their bodies dismembered. To date, no bodies have been found.

During the trial, two defense witnesses testified they saw O'Hair alive during the time prosecutors allege she was kidnapped or killed.

Gordon, an associate with the NAMB's interfaith evangelism team, testified May 25 that he

Gold Medallion finalists selected

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Four books published by Broadman & Holman Publishers, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, have been selected as finalists in the 2000 Gold Medallion Awards Competition sponsored by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association.

B&H books selected as finalists and their categories include: Holman Bible Atlas by Thomas V. Brisco (reference works/commentaries); New American Commentary, Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth by Daniel Block (reference works/commentaries); Marriage God's Way by Henry Brandt & Kerry L. Skinner (marriage); and A Heart Like His by Beth Moore with Dale McCleskey (Bible study).

The winners in this 23nd annual competition will be announced July 8 during the annual convention of the Christian Booksellers Association in New Orleans.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



GAs of First Church, Philadelphia

GAs of First Church, Philadelphia, received their bracelets and charms for finishing the WorldVenture books for their grade levels. Pictured (from left, first row) Channing Kinard, Kera Robinson, and Calland Manning; (second row) April Sanders, Rebecca Moore, Elizabeth Thomas; (third row) Reagan Jackson, Rachel Moore, Katie Thrash, Sarah Elizabeth Gilbert; (fourth row) Alisha Li, Charleigh Alford, and Charlotte Miller. Not pictured: Laurel Allen, Morgan Bailey, Joyce Li, and Stephanie McCrary.

Senior adults (pictured) were honored on Senior Adult Day at Forest Hill Church, Jackson. Wayne N. McCullough is pastor.



Senior adults of Forest Hill Church, Jackson



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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. (*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



First Church, Wiggins, held a ground breaking ceremony on May 14 for Phase III of its building/renovation program. The construction project will include renovation of the preschool and children's departments; baptistry dressing areas; and the creation of a church library. A new music ministry suite will be constructed to include an area for all music activities. Pictured (from left, front row) are Andy Hadley, minister of music; Graham Hales, interim pastor; Clyde Caraway, minister of education/senior adults; and (back row) Jill Walters, Gene Alexander, Richard Evans, Roger White, David White, and Ruth Ford, members of the committee.

James Lee Bailey, minister, dies

James Lee Bailey, 61, pastor of Liberty Hill Church, Panola Association, died June 5 of heart failure. Services were held June 7 at Liberty Hill Church, with burial in the Wallerville Cemetery in New Albany.

Bailey received his education at William



Bailey

Carey College, New Orleans Seminary, and received his doctorate from Covington Seminary, Rossville, Ga.

Survivors include his wife Ruthan Cobb Bailey of Pope; daughters, Barbara Gail Newton and Bonnie Gilbert, both of Hattiesburg; and

Belinda Ann Hall of Prentiss; son, Bryan L. Bailey of Oxford; mother, Vallie Lee Bailey of New Albany; 10 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

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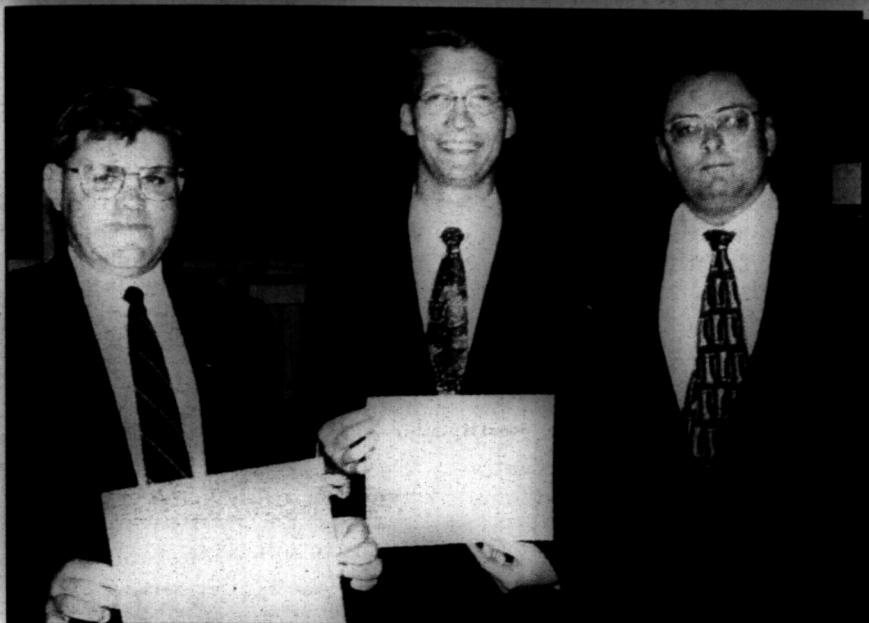
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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Thrasher Church, Booneville, licensed Tim Lowrey and Larry Brinker to the ministry on May 28. Pictured (from left) are Lowrey, Brinker, and Kevin Merritt, pastor.

Mike Pennock has recently



Pennock

entered vocational evangelism and missions. He previously served Woodlawn Church, Vicksburg, as pastor. Pennock is available for revivals, one-day evangelism conferences, seminars, and supply. He may be contacted at (601) 661-5605, (601) 297-5892, or the evangelism department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Baptist Health Systems has announced the following staff additions: Al Padgett has been named Director of Radiology. Padgett goes to Baptist from Boynton Beach, Fla., where he served as administrative direc-

tor of Radiological Services at Bethesda Memorial Hospital. Padgett holds a bachelor's degree in radiologic technology from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas, as well as a bachelor's in occupational education from Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas. Previously, he served at East Jefferson General Hospital in Metairie, La., and at United States Air Force medical centers in Texas, Maine, and Virginia. Edgar Berryman has joined the Pastoral Care staff as a chaplain. Berryman holds bachelor of arts and associate of arts degrees in Biblical studies from the Carolina University of Theology in Lincolnton, N.C., and is currently enrolled there in the master of ministry program. Prior to coming to

Baptist, Berryman served as pastor of Mt. Olive Church in Carthage, and as associate minister at the New County Line M.B. Church in Carthage. In addition, he recently graduated from the Clinical Pastoral Education program at Baptist. He is Baptist's first African-American chaplain.

Cappe Thompson has been named Child Life Specialist. Thompson holds a bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family studies from Mississippi State University with an emphasis in Child Life. In addition, she has completed an internship at Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, Md. She is a Certified Child Life Specialist.



Padgett



Thompson



Berryman

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

The Fast-Pitch Softball Coaching Clinic will be held on June 21 on the William Carey College Hattiesburg campus from 8 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The camp will begin with registration from 8 a.m. until 9 a.m. at the Timberton Softball Complex across from the campus. Designed for coaches, the clinic will focus on pitching and catching, offensive and defensive drills, and organizing and implementing an effective practice. Total cost for the clinic is \$50 and will include lunch. A \$10 late registration fee will be accessed to coaches who do not pre-register. For more information call Carrie Byrd at (601) 582-6431.



Miss Blue Mountain College and her court

Mississippi College's (MC) transfer and freshmen students will be given orientation sessions on the MC campus in July. Orientation for transfer students will be July 7-8. Freshman orientation will be July 14-15. Each of the sessions will begin with check-in at 5 p.m. Following dinner, a general session for all parents and students will be held followed by briefing sessions

for students on the MC Experience as well as instructions for student advising. Parents will be hosted at an 8:30 p.m. reception, and students will have the opportunity to attend Coffee House 2000. Tours on campus will be available for the parents. There will also be a Parents Support Group session. For more information concerning registration and fee, call (601) 925-3800 or (800) 738-1236, or the website at www.mc.edu/admissions/orientation.

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Collegiate workers catch vision for ministry

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP) — It had only been a day since Yvette Palmer had last seen K'na



DISCOVERING AREAS OF MINISTRY — Bill Henry of National Student Ministries waits to cross a busy street in Thailand. He participated in a Discovery Tour with other campus ministers who visited various countries in the area.

VBS dates

Glade, Laurel: June 19-23; 8-11 a.m.; age 3-grade 6.

(K'na), but as soon as Palmer stepped out of the van, her friend of one day ran up to her with tears in her eyes and hugged her.

After a few minutes of small talk, K'na grabbed Palmer by the hand and slowly dragged her away from the rest of the group. She untied the small bracelet around her wrist that read "Happy New Year 2000" and handed it to Palmer.

"This is very special to me, I've had it a long time," 14-year-old K'na said as she placed the bracelet on Palmer's arm.

Now it was Palmer's turn to cry. One more intense hug from K'na and Palmer was gone. But she'll never forget the young girl she met in a restricted country in Southeast Asia.

"I can't imagine me not being able to see her again—in eternity," said Palmer, Baptist college

giate minister at Louisiana State University at both Eunice and Alexandria. "I think that would break my heart if she didn't have a chance."

Born Buddhist, K'na's chances of hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ dwindle every year. That fact alone motivated 73 college ministers to visit one of the most unreached areas of the world in order to find ways to involve college students in ministry in Southeast Asia.

The group, made up of Baptist collegiate ministers from campuses, churches, and state conventions, as well as musicians scattered among the teams, split up into five countries in Southeast Asia to find ways students could minister in the region.

"The basic vision of these trips is to expose campus ministers to our field personnel and their work and expose our field personnel to campus ministers and the resources they have in students," said Mike Lopez, who leads student mobilization for the International Mission Board (IMB). "But we also wanted to

expose both groups to what God is doing in the region."

It didn't take long for John Ramirez to get interested.

Ramirez, director of collegiate ministries in the New England Baptist Convention, saw quickly how much the people of Southeast Asia need Christ. In particular it was the faces of young Buddhist monks in training, wearing their traditional orange robes that first inspired him.

"Those are the faces I'll think of when I go back," Ramirez said. "In one way they will haunt me because I know what kind of bondage they will be in, but in another way, they don't haunt me. I see them as beautiful kids."

As Palmer and Alan Garnett, Baptist campus minister for Western Oregon University, were touched by the people of Southeast Asia, the two already envisioned a joint missions project in Southeast Asia. They had seen agricultural projects and English language teaching opportunities where they could get their students involved.

"Just about anything we would want to do. There seemed like an open door everywhere," Garnett said.

Last year, the IMB helped 1,756 college students travel to 90 countries for missions projects. The board provides logis-

tical help for getting tickets, visas, and insurance for students or student groups.

"Students are perfect for overseas ministry," Lopez said. "They are non-threatening. They don't come in with a lot of pre-set agendas. They are very flexible, loving and teachable."

Many of these college students can minister in strategic universities around the world where there are few Christian witnesses.

"One of the things I was very encouraged by on this trip is I see the IMB strategically looking at the university campuses and wanting college students to reach them," said Bill Henry, director of National Student Ministries at LifeWay Christian Resources.

As the board keeps enlarging its commitment into the Last Frontier, it continues to ask students to play larger roles in what had previously been known as closed countries. Southeast Asia is no exception.

As Palmer plans to join Garnett on a return trip to the region with her college students, this time she has a 14-year-old reason to return.

"When it was time to go, K'na just clung to me like she didn't want to let go, and of course I felt the same way," Palmer said. "I didn't want to let her go."

Alvin O. Collins, minister, dies

Alvin O. Collins, 78, a minister, died of liver cancer June 4 in Houston, Texas. Services were held June 10 at Beulah Cemetery in Union County. A native of Myrtle, he received degrees from Mississippi College and Southern Seminary. He did graduate study at Cambridge University. Collins was a former pastor of First Church, Booneville, and 15th Avenue Church, Meridian. He also pastored churches in Indiana and Kentucky. Collins joined the faculty of Houston Baptist University in 1963 where he was a professor and chairman of the Christianity and Philosophy Department until his retirement in 1991. Survivors include his wife Margaret; sons, Gordon Wayne

Collins and Robert Graham Collins, both of Houston, Texas; brothers, Charles Collins, Tenn., and Dwane Collins, Jackson; and nephew, Curtis Collins, Jackson. Memorials may be made to the A. O. Collins Theology Lectureship Series, Houston Baptist University, 7502 Fondren Road, Houston TX 77074, or Willow Meadows Baptist Church, 4300 W. Bellfort, Houston TX 77035.

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Revival results

Escatawpa, Escatawpa: May 7-10; Tim Posey, evangelist; seven professions of faith; five on statement.

Poplar Flat, Louisville: June 18-21; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7:15 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7:15 p.m.; Roy McHenry, Amory, evangelist; Johnny Masters, West Point, music; Gayle Pope, pastor.

Calvary, Durant: June 18-21; services, 7 p.m.; Gene Richardson, evangelist; Luther Boggan, music.

Airport, Grenada: June 18-21; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Bobby D. McKay, pastor, evangelist; Jimmy Hood, music.

Crossroads, Decatur: June 18-21; 7 p.m.; Sunday night, 6 p.m.; Pat Nations, pastor.

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BETHLEHEM BAPTIST CHURCH, Laurel, is seeking to fill the position of associate pastor. Duties include administrative tasks for church programs, pastoral duties, and mission ministries. Send resume to Bethlehem Baptist Church, ATTN: Bob Smiley, 838 Reid Road, Laurel, MS 39443.

PASTOR NEEDED

First Baptist Church, Rota, Spain, (S.B.C. & E.B.C. affiliated) is searching for a pastor to begin the summer of 2001. The candidate should be self-supporting.

The congregation of 20-30 people is drawn from a nearby military base. This is an English-speaking ministry. The ability to speak Spanish would be a plus, but is not required. The church can provide housing and utilities as well as a percentage of the monthly offering. We are looking for a 2-3 year commitment.

If interested or desire more information, please notify Barry Barnet (pastor) at barrylinda@teleline.es, or Ernie Belcher at ernie132@yahoo.com, or write to the church at First Baptist Church, Calle Ortega Y Gasset, #5 11520, Rota (Cádiz) Spain.

Barry Barnet, pastor
First Baptist Church
Rota, Spain

APPRECIATE PRAYERS, LOVE

Editor:

On June 3, 1999, God gave my wife and me two beautiful children, Madeleine Nicole and Caleb McKay Pearce. My wife, Melissa, had developed toxemia and therefore the twins were delivered six weeks early. Caleb was soon declared healthy and in excellent condition. Madeleine, however, had a heart murmur. Prayers began to go up for her and us all over the world. After a lengthy oper-

WOMEN CAN SERVE

Editor:

I see where we Southern Baptists are going to have a new statement of our faith and message. Some things change; some stay the same. One of the changes has already received a good deal of ink and will probably get more. It may not be the most important alteration, but it is among the more interesting, this feat of linguistic legerdemain.

The new statement declares that women should not serve as

pastors because — according to one interpretation of scripture — women should not sit in authority over men. What is stated is that women should not be pastors. What is implied is that pastors are authorities. The tacit message bothers me more than the one that is expressed.

Just what do we Baptists mean when we describe our pastors as being in authority? Perhaps they are more educated in matters spiritual and ecclesiastical. Some certainly are great counselors, advisers, leaders, guides, teachers, preachers, administrators, and lots more. But authority?

There are many people whose opinions I respect and guidance I crave. The list is long and goes back many years. It includes those in this life who have loved me and whom I have loved the most. It most certainly includes many women, but not one of them could or would be my spiritual authority.

When I think of authority, I think of a judge, an expert, a master. I'm sorry, but that is not what real Baptists are looking for in a pastor. We Baptists have a Judge and Master already, thank you.

Our best pastors are called to serve. I expect women can do that very well.

Paul Laughlin
Hattiesburg

FLAG: LIKE IT OR LEAVE

Editor:

I am writing this in response to Charles E. Poole's

letter. He said that the flag "includes an image reminiscent of a dark chapter of oppression and injustice." The Confederate symbol is not a hate symbol. The "X" is St. Andrew's Cross. The 13 stars represent the 11 Southern states that seceded, plus Missouri and Kentucky. The symbol was not the first Confederate national flag, but it was on the second and third national flags, and on the naval flag. Confederate flags flew on government buildings and in battle. Most of the whites in the South were small farmers; slave owners were a minority. Some of the free blacks owned slaves. Most of the slave owners were good to their slaves. Robert E. Lee opposed slavery.

The men who fought for the Confederacy did not fight for oppression. They fought for morality and decency, individual freedom and responsibility, limited government, and states' rights.

There was slavery under the Confederate flag, but slavery was practiced under the American flag before the Civil War. Should we throw away the American flag, too?

Mr. Poole suggests replacing the Confederate symbol. My question is, "Replace it with what?" A magnolia tree? A dollar sign?"

Our state flag should remain as is. It is part of our history and heritage. If you don't like it, leave.

Kevin Waller
Meadville



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Years of service show spirit of Pickens County

CARROLLTON, Ala. (BP) — Pickens County, Ala., comes up on you like a clump of goldenrod on the roadside, so quickly you almost miss it. The neon lights and barbecue joints lie miles behind. Just up ahead, past small towns like Gordo and Elwood, past lanky loblolly pines and sloughs populated by turtles and cypress knees, is the sign for Carrollton, population 1,151, the Pickens County seat.

Stop folks on the street, and there's a good chance you will meet someone who went to church with an International Mission Board (IMB) missionary.

Pickens County has had someone serving overseas in missions consistently since 1851. And 149 years and 16 IMB missionaries later, the missions call is still heard — and heeded — by churchgoers who call Pickens County home.

Pickens County has a heritage of faith as thick as the morning mist over the nearby Tombigbee Waterway. All together, the association has 31 Southern Baptist churches, with membership totals ranging from 24 to 527.

But their faith doesn't stop at home. Starting with Pickens (then called Grants Creek) Church member Martha Foster Crawford, and her husband, T.P., who were appointed as missionaries to China in 1851, church members all over

the association have prayed, given, and gone for the cause of global missions.

What is the secret that keeps missions alive in Pickens County?

In an age when the mega-church is king and missions budgets may be whittled down to make room for building funds, this quiet spot has an uncanny grasp on the missions message.

From feeding and clothing the county's

needy to jail ministries and short-term missions projects, churches across the county "gee and haw together" for the cause, says Gary Farley, associational missionary in Pickens County. "We just believe in coming together around missions."

Farley points out another ingredient as ubiquitous as collard greens — a long-standing missions heritage.

One look around Carrollton will prove it's not the bricks or offerings that build these churches; it's the faithful prayers and preserved memories of missions heroes that bring life and breath to generations of Christians.

Ask Farley, and he'll suggest that a close-knit, small town environment helps keep people down to earth and missions stories fresh.

"Jesus spent most of his time in rural areas. He wanted to plant the gospel in a place where folks knew folks," Farley says.

In a small town, there are generations of people who remember. They tell a story, and the next generation builds on that story. A heritage is born.

Nell Jones, associational director for the Woman's Missionary Union in Pickens County for 10 years, says missions is indelibly impressed on people's hearts.

"I think it's just part of our lives," Jones says. "We're missions-minded like that. We've always tried to live the Great Commission."



FOSTERING A HEART FOR MISSIONS — Children sample Chinese food and try to use chopsticks for the first time during dinner at the Addie Cox Missions Festival at Carrollton (Ala.) Baptist Church. The festival is a tangible way to bring children an international missions experience, something Cox strove to do among children of the community during her retirement. The 31 Southern Baptist churches of Pickens County carry on a missions heritage that stretches back through a continuous string of 15 missionaries to Martha Foster Crawford, a local woman who served as a missionary to China from 1851 to 1892. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

LIFE AND WORK

Here is your God

Isaiah 40:10-11, 18-31

By Matt Loving

In today's world, numerous people believe in the existence of God, but hold different views about the nature of God. Misconceptions about what God is like stem from poor understandings of God's nature as revealed in the Bible. People do not honor or worship God because they do not understand who he is.

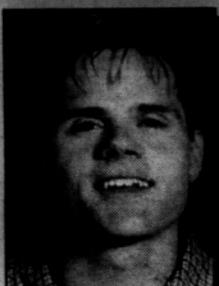
The book of Isaiah provides deep insight to the truth that God is the sovereign, all-powerful Creator who relates to people with tender care and strengthening support. When people begin to understand these aspects of the true

nature of God it results in a life lived to worship him.

The incomparable God (vv. 18-29).

The people of Judah were asked a rhetorical question. This was to make the point that God is incomparable. People tend to make idols in their lives, whether religious, materialistic, a desire for power, or relationships. All these things are man-made pursuits and are lifeless and powerless.

Our perspective of God must be that nothing or nobody compares with him. Henry T. and Richard Blackaby wrote that "a reverent fear of holy God will dramatically affect the



Loving

way a person lives...one of the greatest condemnations of our day may be that we have lost the fear of God...we are not his equals. He has forgiven us, but we are still his creatures. He is God, and we are not!" (Experiencing God: Day-By-Day Devotional and Journal, pg. 154).

The sovereign ruler (vv. 21-24).

Isaiah reminds the people of what they had known and experienced all along: that no matter what, God is in control of all things. When we accept the truth that God is the one God, we must also acknowledge his authority as sovereign ruler over all the earth. It is then that we can exclaim as Joseph did in Genesis 50 verse 20 that no matter what happens or by what apparent means "God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done,

the saving of many lives".

The powerful creator (vv. 25-28). God's rule over all that exists grows out of his nature as Creator. The universe is not a result of chance or boredom but rather of God's purposeful creative actions. God's power can be viewed in the ever present stars that he alone created and in the vastness of the universe he sustains. We gain assurance in God by observing his creation and in the knowledge of his unlimited power. Also, as we view his creation as his handiwork, we know that as Creator, he alone knows best how to run our lives. This should lead to a total abandonment of oneself to whatever the Lord may require of you.

The caring helper (vv. 10-11, 29-31). Isaiah carefully recorded the truth about what God is like in these verses, as he listed caring aspects of God early in the chapter and in the closing remarks.

He compared God to a gentle shepherd who gently leads his flock and as the source of strength for those who hope in him. This is an essential aspect of God that many people seem to have forgotten about. People don't so much question God's power as much as they wonder about his care for them as an individual. I think that this grows from the failure to understand our own weakness apart from God. We like to think that we can do it all. In these verses, however, we begin to understand that acknowledging weakness to God is the first step in experiencing his care and enabling power.

Saint Augustine once recorded the prayerful statement to the Lord that "you made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you" (Confessions, pg. 21).

Loving is minister of youth at Oak Hill Church, Poplarville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Worship the Redeemer

Revelation 4:1-3; 5:1-10

By Tommy Bufkin

Worship comes from an Old English word that means "the condition of being worthy." The one who receives worship must be worthy of the honor. Many people today worship lesser gods that are not worthy of their devotion and leave them empty and unfulfilled. God, alone, is worthy of the worship of man. The Lamb of God is worthy of honor and praise beyond anyone or anything else.

Recognize God's majesty (4:1-3). The vision changes and John saw an opening into heaven itself. He is invited to take a closer look that his vision may be clear.

"In the Spirit" indicates a

heightening of John's worship experience (see 1:10). It does not have to point to an "ecstatic" episode.

John was in the right spiritual position to see what the Lord wanted him to see. He saw a throne, a place of power and authority. On the throne was one of majesty and power which is indicated by vivid imagery.

The one on the throne appeared like precious jewels. The jasper of the Bible is perhaps the diamond, a symbol of purity and brilliancy. The carnelian is always red, perhaps reflecting God's justice, judgment, and wrath. Around the throne is a rainbow of emerald green, a visible



Bufkin

reminder of the glory of God (see Ezekiel 1:28).

The rest of chapter 4 inspires a sense of the wonder, power, majesty, and worthiness of God. The people of God and all of creation worship the one who is worthy.

Realize Jesus' uniqueness (5:1-5). On the throne John sees a scroll in the right hand of power offered to any who could open it. This scroll was different in two significant ways. It was written on both sides which was contrary to custom. A scroll was written on only one side and that side rolled inward. Second, it was sealed with seven seals. A scroll was sealed with imprinted wax to protect its contents from those not authorized. Seven seals indicate the importance of the contents and its completely hidden nature.

What are the contents of this scroll? Some say it is the

Lamb's Book of Life (see 13:8), the Old Testament, a record of events to come, or God's redemptive plan throughout history. The last is the most probable explanation given what follows.

Two things are very clear in John's vision: the need to open the scroll and the unworthiness of anyone to open it. John represents all of mankind weeping over their failure, their unworthiness.

John is told not to cry for there is one who can open the seals. "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" and "Root of David" identify this one as victor. It was prophesied that Judah would reign like a lion (Gen. 49:9-10) and that the Messiah would come from David's descendants (Is. 11:1-9). Because Jesus fulfilled these prophecies through his death on the cross and resurrection, he was uniquely qualified to open the seals.

Rejoice in Christ's redemption (5:6-10). Instead

of a lion, John sees a Lamb, a special Lamb. This Lamb bore the scars of being sacrificed. Jesus had offered himself as a sacrifice and bore in his resurrected body the scars of that sacrifice. Horns are symbols for power and eyes symbolize all-knowing vision. By the Lamb come power, understanding, and the gift of the Spirit.

This worthy Lamb removes the scroll from its place bringing forth praise and worship from all. The church represented by the elders and all of creation represented by the four living creatures falls down in offering themselves in worship.

This new song is of the redemptive work of Christ. He is worthy because he laid down his life for the salvation of the world. He took the unworthy ones and raised them to glory and honor. He is truly worthy of worship.

Bufkin is pastor of Mt. Zion Church, Rankin Association.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Characteristics of believers:

persistence

Philippians 3:1-21

By Juanita West

Watch a little girl just learning to tie her shoes and she will persist until the feat has been accomplished. A young boy will try and try again and again to hit that ball placed on the tee in front of him. Giving up never enters either child's mind.

As Christians, we sometimes miss out on the joy of victory because we are not persistent in pursuing our goals. In this lesson, Paul expounds upon the Christians need for "stickability" in pursuit of true joy that comes through a daily, committed relationship with Jesus Christ.



West

Constant pursuit (vv. 7-11).

In these verses, Paul returns to the theme of "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (1:21, NKJ). The apostle reminds the Philippian Christians that he too had once lived by the law and had even persecuted by the law, but all this he has "counted loss for Christ" (v. 7 NKJ).

Through his personal encounter with Jesus Christ, Paul discovered that all those things he had considered important, were nothing. He "counts them as rubbish" (v. 8, NKJ). Paul asserts that his righteousness in the law has been replaced "through faith in Christ, the righteousness

which is from God by faith" (v 9, NKJ). The apostle now is living his life in the continuous pursuit of the "power of his [Jesus] resurrection."

Any goal that we set out to attain must be pursued continuously. Our dedication to attaining that goal demonstrates to others

the importance each goal has in our lives. The Christian should constantly seek a closer, more committed daily walk with God. Like Paul, we should be able to count all things as loss "that I may gain Christ" (v 8, NKJ).

Coveted prize (vv. 12-16).

Our nation has been rocked with the question of the popular TV show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" For many people, reaching this goal is the ultimate prize in life.

Paul, however, declares that there is a much greater, more noble prize for which we must

strive. We need to put all other events behind us and "press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (v 14, NKJ).

The imagery of a runner reminds the Philippians of the importance of being single-minded in the pursuit of faith. Paul does not suggest that being a Christian is like running a race, but that a Christian must be steadfast in pursuing and attaining an even closer walk with God.

According to Warren W. Wiersbe, "Too many Christians have divided lives, part in the world and part for the Lord...Our calling is a 'high calling' and a 'heavenly calling' and if we live for this world, we lose the prize that goes with our high calling" (The Expository Outlines of the New Testament, p. 320).

Contrasting persuasions (vv. 17-21). Paul urges the Philippians to join in following his example of living for Jesus

so that others will have even their (Philippian Christians) examples to use as a model. Yet, he cautions them to be wary of those who walk after the world's way, and the things of the world consume them.

Paul warns about the "enemies of the cross of Christ" (v. 18) and then he weeps for them. He admonishes the Philippian church to remember that they (we) are citizens of heaven and their (our) ambition should be to strive toward the perfection of Jesus Christ.

How exhilarating and exciting it is to be the first runner to cross that finish line. The entire crowd around bursts into cheers of joy and acclamation. One day all Christians will experience the wonder of crossing the goal line. We cannot even begin to imagine the complete joy and happiness that will be ours. "We shall be like Him!" (Wiersbe, p.320).

West is a member of Calvary Church, Newton.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

MARCH 1-31, 2000 MEMORIALS

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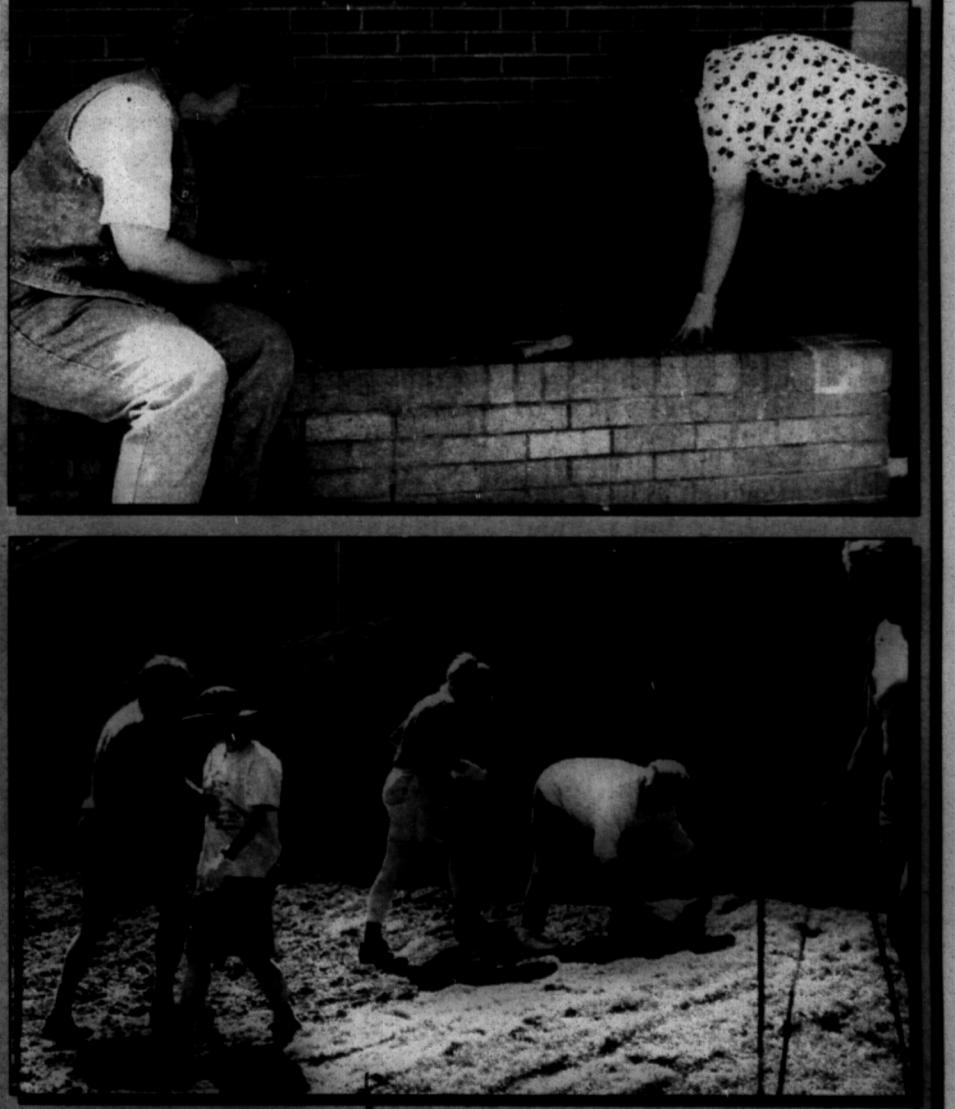
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BCV staff works to beautify campuses



In spite of hypocrites, Smith finds Christ

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — "That Jesus stuff really works, doesn't it?"

Sherman Smith had caught a fellow Seattle Seahawk in a compromising position; later, tapping him on the shoulder, Smith took aim at the player — the "hypocrite" — who had called himself a Christian.

Smith, running backs coach for the Tennessee Titans the past five years and nine-year NFL veteran, recounted his disdain for hypocrites during a June 2 chapel service at the Southern Baptist Convention Building in Nashville, Tenn. — and during that evening's Billy Graham crusade in the city's Adelphia Coliseum.

"I'm a visual learner," Smith said. One of his pet phrases was, "What you do speaks so loud I can't hear a word you're saying."

Although he had an interest in knowing Jesus Christ as a teenager and young adult, Smith devoted more attention to how athletes and others who called themselves Christians acted rather than what they said — and he wasn't impressed, not during his college career as a quarterback at Miami (Ohio) University, tallying a 33-1-1 record, and not as a second-round draft pick of the NFL's Seahawks.

Not until Ken Hutcherson showed up for training camp.

A hard-hitting middle linebacker and unabashed Christian, Hutcherson caught Smith's attention, and Smith watched Hutcherson closely for six weeks, looking

for him to stumble, to be a hypocrite like so many others.

Then, unexpectedly, came the test. A gut-wrenching test.

Hutcherson was cut down from behind in a play during the last preseason game of 1976, left on the ground crying out in agony with a knee injury. Somber teammates

watched as he was carted off the field. Later came the news that Hutcherson had suffered a career-ending blow to his knee.

Teammates came by to console Hutcherson after the game, the last of whom was Smith, who still had Hutcherson's faith under a microscope.

"Sherm," Hutcherson, somehow upbeat and smiling with ice packs on his knee, said to Smith, "I'm excited to see what God has planned for my life."

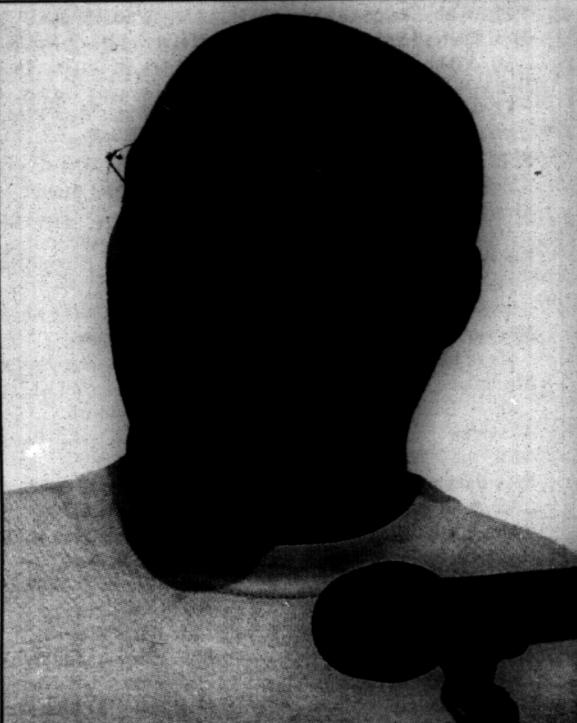
"You see, Sherm, I'm a Christian and nothing happens in my life unless it's filtered through God's hands first."

Smith responded to Hutcherson in a way he never had to a Christian before: "Tell me more."

Right there in the locker room, Hutcherson shared the gospel with Smith. He told him of God's love, God's yearning to impart forgiveness and a new life through faith and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Smith listened but didn't take that step of faith until a few weeks later, when he was facing a less-serious knee injury that nevertheless had left him feeling, "It's over with."

Sitting in his car, Smith finally took hold of what Hutcherson had said. "Lord, I need you to take control," Smith prayed, humbling himself, confessing his sinfulness, inviting Christ into his life, and sensing something new. Supplanting his preoccupation with hypocrites was a peace and a confidence I had never known before."



Smith

Youth tap Internet for Billy Graham crusade

FRANKLIN, Tenn. (BP) — A tech-savvy youth group put a new twist on the traditional method of door-to-door evangelism by using the Internet to invite friends to the Middle Tennessee Billy Graham Crusade.

Darren Whitehead, a youth associate at the 5,000-member First Church, Franklin, Tenn., said the idea to turn the youth group's new website into a tool for evangelism came a few

weeks prior to the crusade at Nashville's Adelphia Coliseum.

"Because of all the preparation for the crusade, we had canceled our Wednesday evening services, but instead of just sitting at home, we thought it would be a great idea for our students to use Wednesday night as an opportunity to call friends, invite them to the crusade, and then get online and talk about their experiences," Whitehead said.

In other words, the youth group's Wednesday night service, called "Fusion," was held live in cyberspace. Students were able to log onto the website, www.fusionyouth.com, and share praise reports, prayer requests, and outreach in a specially designed chat room on the site.

"It was awesome," said Whitehead, a native of Australia. "We had more than 100 kids in and out of the chat rooms during the event."

Whitehead called the event interactive evangelism. "One student used the chat room to invite a friend who was involved in Satanism to the Billy Graham crusade," Whitehead said.

Another student organized a group of teens who went to a local shopping center and invited people to the four-day crusade.

Brandon Norman, an eighth grade student, encouraged those in the chat room to pray that God would provide good weather for the crusade after rain appeared in the forecast.

"I don't think that God will let it rain and cancel something so grand and major," Norman wrote online. "So many people are going to come to Christ ... and that is like so many more people going to heaven."

A student identifying himself as "David" wrote, "The coolest thing to happen at [the Billy

Graham crusade] was all the people that came to the Lord."

Another student, identified as "Gailsmeis," shared about her experiences at the crusade. "I had like four or five kids that just sat around me wanting to accept Christ after Billy Graham spoke. It was ... awesome."

Rick White, pastor of First Church, praised the innovation of the youth ministry team.

"What they did Wednesday night just shows that this generation communicates differently," White said. "It gives us some insight in what we can expect down the road."

White said the advances in technology show that churches "are probably not going to be able to do it like we've done it in the past."

"It's exciting and frightening," White said. "You do miss the personal touch when you get into the Internet. But by and large, it's an exciting generation."

Whitehead said the youth group's Internet site is a ministry run by students and coordinated by an adult leader. In addition to a prayer and praise message board, the site includes sermons archived from the Wednesday night youth service, downloadable videos, and worship music.

"The Billy Graham crusade," Whitehead recapped, "gave us a great chance to see how the Internet can be used to tell people about Christ."

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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IHEGAJ, B LCFKJ FC CEH
JGGW, FKJ UKGZU: BD FKN
PKF EHFW PN QGBZH, FFK
GRHK CEH JGGW, B MBAA
ZGPH BK CG EBP, FKK
MBAA LOR MBCE EBP, FKK
EH MBCE PH.
WHQHAFCBGK CEWHH:
CMHKCN

Clue: A = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hebrews One: Ten.



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

So many of our leaders on every level have failed us morally and ethically. To whom can I point my son as an earthly role model?

Point him to God's word. Use it constantly and without apology. Talk about the people in the Bible who made mistakes and how they made something good out of them, like King David. Constantly put before him men and women from the Bible and elsewhere who did the right thing and made a difference. Point to leaders in your church and community who take a stand. Encourage your son to search out these people. Satan does an excellent job of getting us to look at the sin rather than

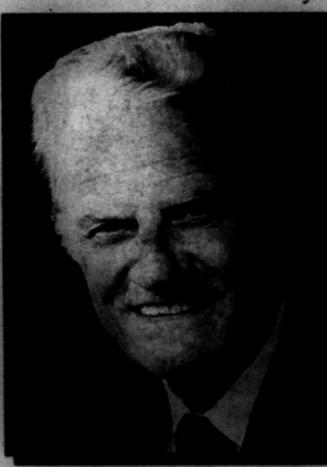
the Savior. We need to be turning the eyes of our children to the things above and not necessarily on fighting the evil. Make this a practice — a lifestyle — and you will raise a son whose eyes are wise and walk is sure.

I suspect my 15-year old daughter is abusing alcohol. How can I find out for sure without damaging the trust I've worked so hard to build in our relationship?

Watch her closely — don't follow or hover — and wait for the opportune moment. I guarantee you it will come! Continue using the trust you have built by spending time with her. This may actually

help her in coming clean with you rather than you having to play the spy. Ask about her friends and what she's looking for in friends. Monitor her allowance and other income so that she does not have a lot of extra cash floating around. Most of all, be careful with her use of a car. Make sure you know where she is going and who she will be with. When you uncover suspicious behavior, bring it out and discuss it based on the trust you have developed. If she is a problem drinker, she may be using the trust you have to get what she wants — a good sign of alcoholism. The sooner you can stop this, the sooner you are diverting her from a tragic path.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. In central Mississippi, Ron Mumbower can be heard from 9-10 a.m. each Wednesday on WHJT-FM 93.5. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.



Graham